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ABSTRACT

Many Indians are leaving their communities to seek employment in the cities, but because of lack of education and social prejudice are forced to live under poor conditions. The Indian Education Center in Vancouver has an adult basic education program that includes counseling. The center tries to help all Indians referred to it; so far it has assisted about 200 Indian men and women. The center tries, through trust, confidence, and friendship, to develop a productive interpersonal relationship with its Indian students. It attempts to create a friendly center atmosphere with T.V., stereo-tapes, ping pong and pool tables. The program is flexible enough to accommodate individual differences. Each person's abilities are identified, and individuals are encouraged to seek personal, social, and academic growth. The help and cooperation of various agencies and individuals are sought and encouraged. The center cooperates, particularly, with agencies, counselors, and social workers that are closely involved with Indian affairs. (Author/SE)

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COUNSELLING WITHIN AN INDIAN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT

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The Indian men and women are moving away from their communities at an increasing rate for opportunities to provide more adequately for the health, housing, medical, educational and employment needs of their families. Single men and women are moving to the towns and cities for education and vocational skill training useful in their home communities and generally. At a meeting of chiefs and councillors in a large Indian fishing village, a councillor spoke with deep feeling that the fishing season had been cut back, the number of boats reduced, and the cannery shut down so that there was less work for fewer Indian men and women. During the past twenty-five years the community had almost doubled in numbers and the only recourse seemed to be the movement of many from this overcrowded, underemployed, but beautiful homesite. This circumstance is also repetetive in widely different settings with the Chilcotin, Peace River, Bulkley Valley, Okanagan, Coast, and, in general, all the Pacific region Indian communities.

Although many Indian men and women are highly skilled and many are making a good living, most have inadequate incomes, housing, and education. Ethnic prejudice has compounded this deprived socio-economic condition. The general realization of the importance of respect and the principle of equality that is due every person regardless of race, language, and status may be developing. Our fiercely competitive society is especially detrimental to the low-economic members. Many Indian people believe that education will provide the opportunities for their betterment: this is a dominant theme of students, parents, and leaders. And these hopes, in spite of the bleakness of the education of the past and the inadequacies of the present, seem to persist and persist with a vigour.

About one half of the 200 men and women who have enrolled at our Indian Education Center in Vancouver during the past five years are referrals from counsellors, teachers and social workers in a variety of social problem areas. These men and women came with hopes and determination and left with confidence and a web of friendship. Some had moved to the city and were without regular jobs. Others were school drop-outs or never really got started. Quite a number were seasonal loggers, fishermen, ranchers and guides. Women with grown-up children and single women were wanting an education restart.

For example:-

Will is strong, handsome and articulate. He is one of the younger sons of a large family and originally lived in a prairie Indian community. He left school with about a Grade 3 some 15 years ago and with this education, he is finding difficulty in getting more than a part-time job. He cannot write well enough to write his story of the Indian people nor was he able to hold a good job as a cashier because of difficulty with figures.

Noreen has raised the children and with encouragement from her husband, she wants a restart from her former Grade 5 level and complete secondary and go to college for a social worker certificate in order to do social work in Indian communities.

Evan is a young married man with two children who started in mill work at 15 after getting his Grade 5, but is now on welfare and wants upgrading to become a bookkkeeper.

Cora is a chief's daughter, band councillor and an Indian artist who wants an educational restart for personal development or upgrading leading to university.

Bertie is a fisherman who has moved his family to Vancouver suburbs for family medical, education and job opportunities and he needs to be able to read and write to get a job skill for work in the city.
Jan was brought in by his social worker as he was in trouble with the law from a home without a mother and an ailing father, a school drop-out in Grade 7 and at 17, without experience, unable to find work.
Cam is an ex-cowboy and rancher, an arthritic, who wants upgrading for business management training for future work with his home band.
A former student and now an Indian social worker referred Simma from a small Indian community in the valley, a widow with two small children now living with her mother, who wanted an education restart to lead to social service training and work with her people.
These few examples illustrate somewhat the wide diversities of personal, family, community and occupational settings. There is a wide range in differences in age, marital status, occupation, education and in physical, emotional and mental characteristics. The needs and wants, interests and attitudes, motivation and goal-seeking differ considerably with each person. But there are some common denominators and these general essential needs are personal recognition and respect, friendliness and trust and expectations in the benefits of general education, occupational skill development, and suitable job opportunities to make a satisfactory living.

Only through trust, confidence and friendship can the counsellor-teacher-social worker or manager develop a productive interpersonal and intragroup relationship. Personalities grow through openess and respect and especially so with attitudinal changes in group dynamics. Effective evidence of this Rogers-Dreikurs-Glasser approach are in a few schools, training laboratories, church and social groups. McGregor with his management X and Y theories created some re-think in business and industrial organization practice. Some government agencies are more

than superficially people oriented. For the most part, the principles of the importance, the respect and the equality of each person are ignored, belittled or condemned. Possibly, too, the limits in the application of these humanistic principles are within us as much as our society system.

Our attempts to develop openess, trust and respect begin with the initial meetings and frequently these are a follow up for the new students, group members, are often friends or relatives of former students. Through openess we may get understanding and thereby mutual trust and friendship and there is a 'buddy' within the group to be a friend. Perhaps the irregular seating arrangement, convenient coffee pot, Indian wall pictures, books and newspapers all around. T.V., stereo-tape, ping pong and pool tables nearby create a friendly and interesting atmosphere. Everyone can help another in some personal, social and academic way. Program flexibilities readily accommodate for individual differences and these individual differences in academic proficiencies can be rather quickly determined. These personal, social, and academic satisfactions are of special importance at the commencement of an educational venture.

A rather important consideration is the emphasis on the positive. Every person in at least one area has possibilities of excellence or near excellence. Recognition in one area will spur developments in others and with growth will come confidence and self respect and respect for others. Other personal, emotional and attitudinal developments will come through supportive group relationships to modify the overly anxious, the exhibitionist, or the too retiring. We try to use encouragments in various manners because of its remarkable effectiveness for personal, social and academic growth.

For many, their problems are not multi but maxi. Forty year old Biff with wife and two half-grown children is in debt and hasn't been able to get a ranch managing job since he lost his over a year ago. Jane's five children are in boarding homes; her man is in jail for beating her up; she is alone in the city to upgrade from a Grade 2 level to take a cook's course. Larry is 28 with a pregnant wife and without a job or a skill and left school under duress with about a Grade 5. How can hopes and dreams be furthered, plans projected, motivations strengthened, anxieties lessened and a good start made for a new life? The problems and responsibilities of adulthood are often severe for us but for those lacking education, skills, job experience and finances, life can at times be almost intolerable.

As with so many others in similar circumstances, Biff, Jane and Larry are successfully completing educational programs and heading for a new and better way of life. With inner hope and determination, encouragement and guidance and advice from friends, relatives, counsellors, social workers and teachers, their lives are renewed. The difficulties can be challenges for personal development, increase in confidence and problem solving abilities. And there is some merit to the viewpoints and practice of Dr. Glasser and Synanon in the self responsibility of everyone for his own life and not fate or God or circumstance. The circumstances, however, of poverty and personal disabilities have critical impacts on the lives of many so that the services of the counsellors, teachers, social workers, health specialists, employment officers are essential.

The reason given by all the students that have enrolled for their return to school is that their education will provide skills and opportunities for suitable occupations to make a satisfactory living. Our basic education program develops the fundamentals for their commenc-

ment. These fundamentals are skill proficiencies in reading, writing, and arithmetic. These basics, of course, have utility in every day living and their skill developments extend through high school, vocational school, college and university. In minor and co-ordinate roles are social, biological and physical science studies. Social, recreational, artistic and handicraft activities relate to the interests of the individuals and the group. We have adult based materials that we have tried and found suitable and adjusted for our own needs as well as developed some of our own materials. Mott, Sask., Newstart, Cambridge Adult Basic programs, Laubach, Follet, Stech-Vaughan, Brittanica, Readers Digest, and SRA are some of the basic education program materials that we have and include where they suit. We work individually and in small groups with other students as helpers and sometimes with volunteer aides. We are continually trying new and better ways to get involvement and participation, relating our skill development programs to real situations, and using problem solving approaches, discussions, and group co-operative work as much as we can. The 'life skills' problem solving situations arise daily within personal experiences of medical and physical check-up appointments, housing, transportation, recreation, social relations, the law, budgeting and credit. During initial interview and at commencement we have simple and also fairly extensive academic skill proficiency tests so that the academic needs of the students can be considered within the flexibility of the program. Without invading privacy, interviews provide understanding for personal and social adjustment and development. Monthly standard academic achievement tests indicate progress and proficiency levels for graduation and this depends too on personal readiness disposition.

Some are ready to graduate and proceed with 'upgrading' in a month, most within three months, and only a few within a year who have special educational needs. Most will continue with 'upgrading', some will go to short vocational training courses or on-the-job training, and others to suitable jobs. Many have seasonal occupations and further their education between jobs. Nearly everyone returns quite frequently for visits and renewing friendships and tell us of their life and accomplishments. These former students are living models for encouragement and pride for all of us.

We try to establish and maintain co-operative relations with Indian Affairs counsellors, placement officers, social workers and administration, Indian Friendship Centres, Indian organizations and Band officers, provincial, municipal and church social workers, the rehab. officers of institutions, counsellors, teachers and directors of regular, vocational and special educational programs, U.B.C. Indian Education Resource Centre - Home School Co-ordinators - and Indian Teachers Association, Manpower and employment offices, University and College education-anthropology-sociology faculty and students and other resource poeple who can be helpful. They help us in a variety of ways and we are often of help to them. For instance, an IAB placement officer refers an arthritic ex-millhand; an IAB vocational counsellor sends over to see us a young married man with a family without a job, a skill and little formal education; a Band social worker asks for an education restart and job skill training for four young Indian men and women, Grade 6 - 7 'drop-outs', who need to make a living for themselves; high school and vocational counsellors refer students for special help in maths. and science; Indian Friendship Center counsellors refer men and women who enquire about educational opportunities and so do the

house mothers of Indian girls home; adult basic education teachers visit us to enquire about methods and materials; university students work with us on their education and sociology projects; an Indian education research officer sees what we are doing that might be of use in their education program and similarly for an educator with the native people of Australia; and CUSO thought that our project might have applications with their overseas work.

Whereas the skills of reading, language and arithmetic of the cognitive domain have instruments of standard achievement tests with a fair degree of reliability and validity, the important attitudinal behavioural changes of the affective domain are observable from time to time but without adequate instruments to categorize and quantify. The average increase in academic skill proficiencies has been one grade for one month of studies in a six hour day and a five day week. Some instances of remarkable achievement are of the three students who started with us at about the Grade 6 level in January two years ago and went on to complete their Grade 12 by the end of the year. There are no failures but a few have superficial commitments and, except for these, all proceed to further 'upgrading', vocational or on-the-job training courses, or to jobs: but some return home for family reasons, to hospital or seasonal work.

Ours is an Indian Affairs Branch - Fraser Indian District - educational service in Indian adult basic education. Educational allowances at Manpower rates are paid for those enrolled as well as salaries, materials, and accommodations. Indian Affairs education, administration and staff specialists provide supportive resources. Our education project is unique; no education service of this type is available here provin-

cially or privately. The support of the Indian people, individually and by organizations, has been very important and the effort and the accomplishments of the students have been remarkable and significant.

Canadian schools are generally considered to be among the best internationally. However, for Indian students, the failure rate of over 90% during ele..ntary and secondary school is very high and it is less, but still shocking, for low economic groups. Depressing statistics of this type in general relate likewise to health, housing, employment, alcoholism, delinquency and family break-up. The costs of living within the poverty cycle are brutally high. The community, organization leaders and the professionals - counsellors, teachers, social workers, rehab. personnel and all the others - have a grave responsibility for correctives and preventives of our society's deep sores of discontent.

TABLE

Grade Level Increases for 1, 2 and 3 month periods of Students in Grades 4 - 7 levels in reading (Comprehension) and Arithmetic (Reasoning).

Time Months	Number of Students	Reading Comprehension Grade Increase Mean	Standard Deviation	Range of Grade Increase
1	68	1.11	.63	0 - 2.4
2	25	1.31	.99	0 - 3.4
3	7	2.5	1.95	.6 - 5.4
		Arithmetic Reasoning Grade Increase Mean		
1	56	.82	.61	0 - 3.2
2	19	.91	.51	0 - 3.0
3	6	2.17	1.7	.3 - 3.9

Mean age of students: 26 years .

Range of age of students: 16 - 51 years.

Ratio of men to women: 2 / 1.

Reference: The Hawthorne Report: A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada, Volume 2, October, 1967.

Page 132: .... there is a 94 per cent loss of school population between grades one and twelve. The national rate of drop-out for non-Indian students is approximately 12 per cent.

Page 131: .... Samples taken throughout the provinces show that approximately 80 per cent of Indian children repeat grade one. ..... The failure pattern then remains consistent through to grade eight. In grade eight, a large number of Indian students leave school.

Page 132: ... The school system is perceived as unchangeable and students conclude that if they cannot meet the requirements of the school, they are automatically unable to succeed at anything in the non-Indian world.

Page 142: It is difficult to imagine how an Indian child attending an ordinary public school could develop anything but a negative self-image. First, there is nothing in his culture represented in it or valued by it.

Page 167: A further requirement in the professional training of teachers is that educators who instruct Indians should have a knowledge of Indian psychology, of native cultures and of the work situation faced by those who live on the reserve.

Reference: A Study of Standardized Reading Test Results of Indian Pupils (1965-1966) by Rose C. Colliou, Language Arts Instruction, Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, 1966.

Page 29: Under the existing conditions, no less than 30% of the pupils below grade eight who participated in this year's testing program are potential drop outs according to the figures tabled in this study.

Reference: Survey of Indian 'School-Leavers' from Grade 1 to 12 by Lyman Jampolsky of Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, September 1, 1966.

Page 1: Of the 2,775 who did not return to school, 1,435 or 50.8% left with grade 8 or less .... 2,256 or 70.7% left with grade 10 or less, the minimum requirement in most provinces for admission to vocational schools.

Page 6: (3) pupils at the high school levels require the reinforcement of an intensified guidance program.

From the high drop-out rates in the regular school system from these references and an estimated grade 7 level of Indain adults, the need of compensatory basic education, upgrading and basic skills training is evident.

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